



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

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In the Name of Allah, the Lord of Grace, the Ever Merciful.

For many years, I have been looking for textbooks on the History of Islam for English-speaking students, yet I have found very few. Most did not overcome a common problem: they did not go beyond the era of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, may Allah be pleased with them all.

Bearing this in mind, we at Darussalam have resolved to present the entire History of Islam to our youth in language that appeals to them, in a simple yet lucid manner. The first four volumes in this series explore Islamic history during the period of the first Four Rightly Guided Caliphs. Later volumes will be devoted to the History of Islam, down through the ages to modern times, In Sha'Allah.

Our past, present, and future are interconnected and interdependent. Therefore, knowing and understanding our history is not optional; it is essential.

This is the fourth volume from this series, which deals with the life of the fourth of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Ali ibn Abi Talib. He was the first male to accept Islam at the young age of approximately nine years. He was the Prophet's cousin, the son of Abu Talib, the Prophet's supportive and loving uncle who protected him during the worst trials of his early Prophethood.

Ali's devotion to the Prophet is best evidenced during the *Hijrah* (migration) when he acted as the Prophet's decoy in Makkah while the Prophet left under the cover of night and migrated to Madinah, accompanied by Abu Bakr.

We would like to thank the author, Maulvi Abdul Aziz; the editor, Umm Khadijah Kathrada; and the designer, Mr. Shahzad Ahmed for their diligent efforts in preparing this volume. We hope this work will inspire our youth to form a personal relationship with Ali ibn Abi Talib and encourage them to commit their lives sincerely to his mission of selflessness and unparalleled courage, which he has left behind as our common heritage.

Abdul Malik Mujahid
Darussalam, Riyadh
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who were present in Madinah held back from swearing allegiance to him. All the Companions in Madinah elected Ali as *Ameer Al-Mu'minîn*, the Commander of the Believers.

The four men most deserving to be Caliphs were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmân, and finally, Ali ibn Abi Talib. This fact was recognized not only by the other Companions, but was predicted by the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) himself.

It is important to realize that the Caliphate of Ali came about as a result of the general agreement of the community, and by the consensus of the Companions. After the death of Uthmân, Ali was the natural choice for the position of Caliph. He was one of the earliest Muslims and one of the first emigrants. He showed exemplary courage on the battlefield and exhibited great intelligence in every situation. He was knowledgeable and possessed rare wisdom in judgment. He was able to tackle new situations and emergencies while being also far-sighted in handling his affairs. He was firm in adhering to the truth.

These were all factors which made Ali the only suitable candidate to lead the Muslims during the crucial period of their history.



Ali ibn Abi Talib

in Makkah:

His Names, Titles,
Kunyah, and Lineage

He



was Ali ibn Abi Talib ibn Abdul Muttalib. His father was Abu Talib, who was in turn the full brother of Abdullah, the father of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, Ali was a paternal first cousin to the Prophet (ﷺ).

Fatimah bint Asad ibn Hisham was Ali's mother, and at birth, she named him 'Asad' in honour of her father. However, Abu Talib referred to him as 'Ali' and he became known by that name.

Ali was born ten years before the Prophet's mission began, and had the distinctive honour of being born inside the structure of the Ka'bah. He belonged to Banu Hashim, which was one of the most prominent clans of Quraysh.

Abdul-Muttalib passed away, Abu Talib had taken care of him and raised him as one of his own. Now, seeing his uncle in a difficult situation, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ wanted to reciprocate the kindness shown to him previously. The Prophet (ﷺ) brought Ali into his household at an early age, and from then on, Ali became a member of the Messenger's close family.

This was one of the greatest blessings that Allah bestowed upon Ali: to be raised and educated by the Messenger of Allah ﷺ himself; to be looked after and taken care of by the man whose character was a living version of the Qur'ân.

Acceptance of Islam

Soon



after the Prophet (ﷺ) received the initial revelation from Allah, Ali came to visit him and found both he and Khadijah (رضي الله عنها) praying in a manner unfamiliar to him. Curious, he asked them, 'What is this?'

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, 'The religion of Allah, which He has chosen for Himself, with which He sent His Messengers. I call you to Allah, the One, and to worship Him.'

Intrigued, Ali answered cautiously, 'This is something I have never heard before today. I will not decide anything until I speak about it to my father, Abu Talib.'

Since the Prophet did not want his secret revealed to anyone until he publicly announced it himself, he told Ali, 'O Ali, if you do not want to accept Islam, then keep quiet about it.'



Emigration

The

morning after the Prophet (ﷺ) slipped away to Madinah, Ali ibn Abi Talib emerged from the house. The Qurayshi men who had surrounded the area recognized him immediately and realized that the Messenger of Allah had escaped their clutches.

Furious, they captured Ali and dragged him to the Ka'bah, abusing him and refusing to release him for some

time. Ali patiently bore their harsh treatment for the Sake of Allah. His concern for the Prophet's safety and the joy that he felt in the knowledge that the Messenger of Allah was protected helped him endure any harm that befell him.

As soon as Ali was able to, he undertook one final task on behalf of the Prophet (ﷺ). He sought out the owners of the deposited items that the Prophet (ﷺ) had left behind. Ali spent three days in Makkah performing this task, ensuring that every article was returned to its owner. Finally, when this was accomplished, he prepared to set out for Madinah and reunite with the Messenger of Allah.

During his emigration journey, Ali hid by day and travelled on foot by night until he reached Madinah at last. Because he had no horse, camel, or donkey to ride on, he had to walk the entire distance. His feet quickly swelled up, the skin cracked and broken. The daytime heat was so intense that it was impossible for him to travel during the day. He had no friend or companion to help him onwards or keep him company. The only thing that kept him going was his faith in Allah and the knowledge that at the end of his journey, he would find safety, security, and comfort in Madinah in the company of the beloved Messenger of Allah (ﷺ).

Ali finally reached Madinah, and was welcomed by



Lillah (i.e. all the praises are for Allah)' 33 times, and *Subhan Allah* (i.e. Glorified be Allah) 33 times. This is better for you than what you have requested."

Al-Hasan and al-Husayn

Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib

Al-Hasan was the oldest son of Ali and Fatimah az-Zahra, and he was the oldest grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah is the one who named him 'Al-Hasan,' and recited the *Adhaan* (call to prayer) in his ears immediately after he was born.

The Prophet (ﷺ) loved his grandsons dearly. One day, he stood on the pulpit with Al-Hasan beside him. He looked from the people to Al-Hasan and said, 'This son of mine is a leader. Perhaps Allah will bring about reconciliation by means of him between two groups of Muslims.'

This description of Al-Hasan as a leader was not only a source of honour for Al-Hasan, but also a prophesy that was

later fulfilled. Much later, the Muslim Ummah was to be reconciled and bloodshed prevented when Al-Hasan gave up his right of caliphate to Mu'awiyah. This took place in the year 41 AH, which was referred to as the Year of Unity.

Al-Hasan closely resembled the Prophet (ﷺ) in physical appearance, until it was remarked that no one resembled the Messenger of Allah as much as al-Hasan did.

Al-Hasan was a quiet man who rarely spoke and avoided disputes with others and never interfered in affairs that were not his concern. However, when he did speak, all those around him would be silenced due to the wisdom and eloquence of his words; and when people would bring him problems to solve, he settled their issues with justice and intelligence.

Al-Hasan bin Ali died in the year 50 AH/ 670 CE.

Al-Husayn ibn Ali:

Al-Husayn was born in Madinah in 4 AH. He was the second son of Ali and Fatimah. Some historians say that he was born on fifth of Sha'bân 4 AH/ January 10, 626 CE. Allah's Messenger named him Al-Husayn.

Once, Allah's Messenger ﷺ put one of his hands on the back of Al-Husayn's head and the other beneath his chin, and kissed him and said, 'Husayn is of me, and I am of Husayn. Allah! Love whoever loves Husayn. Husayn is one of my grandsons.'

Tayy was the tribe of Hatim At-Tai who was famous throughout Arabia for his chivalry and his fabulous generosity. Ali and his men launched their attack on the area belonging to Hatim. His son Adi, a Christian like his father, had succeeded him as chief of the tribe after his death.

The area of Tayy included a temple which housed an idol named Al-Fuls. This temple was extremely popular, which was why it was crucial for the Muslims to destroy it.

Ali and his soldiers attacked at dawn and destroyed the temple. At their sudden approach, Adi, the leader of Banu Hatim, escaped with his immediate family to Syria. One of his sisters, however, was left behind and taken captive along with many others of the tribe.

When she was brought before the Prophet (ﷺ) in Madinah, she begged him to set her free. The Messenger of Allah released her and equipped her for the journey back to her family. She went to her brother in Syria and told him about how she had been treated and asked him to present himself to the Prophet (ﷺ). He agreed and travelled to Madinah, and he was so impressed by the Prophet's behaviour that he embraced Islam, much to the Messenger's joy.

Ali, Governor of Madinah

The expedition of Tabûk took place in the month of Rajab 9 AH and was of great significance in the life of the Messenger of Allah. It had far-reaching effects on the course of Islamic history.

The Prophet appointed Ali as the governor in charge of Madinah while the vast majority of the Muslims were gone to war. In particular, he wished Ali to look after his family and make sure that no harm would come to them.

The hypocrites took this as an opportunity to spread rumours, whispering that the Prophet (ﷺ) found Ali to be a burden and was relieved to be rid of his presence. The hypocrites rejoiced at any occasion on which they could sow discord and cause resentment and hypocrisy.

Ali was so distressed by these malicious tales that he immediately wore his armour, seized his weapons, and

Ali ibn Abi Talib

The Fourth Rightly-Guided Caliph

The devastating murder of the Caliph Uthmân came as a heart-breaking shock to Ali and the other Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Ali's sons al-Hasan and Al-Husayn had been guarding the gate of Uthmân's residence, but the traitorous rebels climbed the back wall of the Caliph's house and murdered him in cold blood.

News of the martyrdom of Uthmân reached the Companions when most of them were in the mosque. Shaken and overwhelmed by grief, Ali demanded to know of his sons, 'How could this happen to Uthmân when you were at the door?' Furious, he slapped Al-Hasan, who had been wounded by the rebels, and struck Al-Husayn on the chest.

Ali then went to Uthmân's home, calling upon Allah. 'O Allah! I declare myself innocent before You of his

blood. I was not part of his murder and did not support his murder in any way.'

The Oath of Allegiance to Ali

Uthmân ibn Affan, the third Rightly-Guided Caliph, was martyred at the hands of the rebels on Friday, 18 Dhul Hijjah 35 AH.

Upon receiving the terrible news, Ali immediately went to the house where Uthmân had been killed. The news spread and people began to gather at the home. Finding Ali present, they said, 'This man has been killed, and the people must have a Caliph. We do not know anyone more deserving of that than you.'

Ali demurred and said, 'I would rather be an adviser to you than become a leader.'

They insisted, 'No, by Allah, we do not know of anyone more deserving of it than you.' He said, 'If you insist, then allegiance should not be taken in secret. I would prefer go to the mosque and accept the people's allegiance there.'

When he entered the mosque, the *Muhâjrûn* and the Ansar came and swore their allegiance to him, and the people followed in suit. Thus, the oath of allegiance to Ali as Caliph took place on 18th Dhul Hijjah 35 AH.

Ali's Death

Ibn Muljam, the man responsible for attacking Ali ibn Abi Talib, was held in custody as Ali lay on his deathbed. Ali decreed that Ibn Muljam was to be treated exactly as Islamic Law demanded – with complete justice. He commanded that should he die, Ibn Muljam was to be executed; however, Ali explicitly forbade anyone from mutilating the traitorous rebel's body.

Addressing his people from where he lay, Ali said, 'O sons of Abdul Muttalib! I do not want you to get involved in shedding the blood of Muslims. No one should be killed in revenge for my killing except the one who killed me. O Hasan! If I die from the blood of his, then give him blow for blow. But do not mutilate the body, for I have heard the Messenger of Allah saying: "Beware of mutilation, even of a wild dog."'

With that, Ali continued to repeat the Name of the Lord until he breathed his last.

The body of *Ameer Al-Mu'mineen* Ali ibn Abi Talib was washed by his two sons, Al-Hasan and Al-Husayn, and by his nephew Abdullah ibn Ja'far. Al-Hasan offered the funeral prayer over him, and soon after Ibn Muljam was executed.

The location of Ali's grave is currently unknown, as people feared that either Ali's enemies would desecrate his grave, or that certain extreme sects would build a shrine over it. The most authentic report is that Al-Hasan buried his father in a remote area of Kufah and kept the location a secret.

Several tombs have been identified, most notably a shrine in Najaf, Iraq; however, various scholars have concluded that it is not the grave of Ali, but rather of another Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ), Al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah.

Ali's Caliphate lasted for four years, nine months, and three days. Allegiance was sworn to him as Caliph on 18 Dhul Hijjah, 35 AH. He died as a martyr on 21 Ramadan, 40 AH. He was 63 years old when he died.

Wives and Children

Ali ibn Abi Talib's first wife was Fatimah bint Muhammad (ﷺ). She bore him two sons and two daughters: Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Zaynab, and Umm Kulthum. During her lifetime, he remained devoted to her and did not marry any other woman.

After she passed away, Ali re-married various women over the course of his life, totalling a number of eight wives during his lifetime. He was blessed with fourteen sons and nineteen daughters. The majority of his descendants came from the lineage of five of his sons: Al-Hasan, Al-Husayn, Muhammad ibn Al-Hanafiyyah, Al-Abbas ibn al-Kilabiyyah, and Umar ibn At-Taghlabiyyah.

Activity

A. Answer the Following Questions

1. Why was the Battle of Nahrawan fought?
2. What did the arbitration discuss?
3. Who was Ibn Muljam? What did he do?
4. Who were the *Khārijites*?
5. Write a brief note on the character of Ali.

B. Fill in the blanks

1. As Ali could not march towards Syria, it was decided that Iraq was for _____ and Syria was for _____.
2. Ali advised his sons to be steadfast in _____ and to not seek _____.
3. Ali was one of the greatest _____ of Islam.